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Trends. Correct Political Incorrectness: Can Germans be Right About Jews?

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Former Chancellor of Germany Helmut Kohl has been publicly excoriated for the making of an analogy. He compared boycotts of his fund-raising campaign to pay for fines incurred on his political party because of his illegal and illicit fund-raising initiatives to Nazi-era boycotts of Jewish shops. A question is whether this analogy is necessarily a violation of acceptable personal behavior (morality) and/or acceptable professional behavior (ethics).

The argument against Kohl is that Nazi treatment of the Jews was, is, and will be a one-of-a-kind, unapproachable evil. His linking of this evil with his own misfortune qualifies as the ultimate in narcissism and obtuseness. The argument for Kohl is that there are similarities between his treatment and that of the Jews. (1) The analogy deals with boycotts, not with equating a boycott with gas chambers. (2) Proscribed Jewish and Kohlian economic behaviors (making a living and fund-raising) were both accepted--formally or informally--at one time and continued to be engaged in by others with more political power.

Treating the Jews under Nazism as an unacceptable entity for engaging in social comparison takes their very humanity away. We only move from the dehumanization of the Nazi era to the sanctification of today's political correctness. Once the Jews are no longer human, the meaning of the evil committed against them ceases to be a lesson for humanity. Could it be, then, that Kohl's analogy is both moral and ethical? (See Alford, C.F. (1997). The political psychology of evil. *Political Psychology*, 18, 1-17; Flint, C. (1998). To explain or understand evil: Comparing hermeneutic and rational choice approaches to the analysis of Nazism: A review essay. *Social Science Quarterly*, 79, 466-474; Germany: Kohl's 'gaffe.' (June 23, 2000). *The New York Times*, p, A8; Sanford, N. (1971). Dehumanization and collective destructiveness. *International Journal of Group Tensions*, 1, 26-41; Strozier, C.B. (1990). Christian fundamentalism, Nazism, and the millennium. *Psychohistory Review*, 18, 207-217.) (Keywords: Ethics, Germany, Jews, Morality, Nazism, Personal Behavior, Professionalism.)